



China trade mission helps break Guinness world record

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Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Assistant Deputy Secretary Sandy Chalmers returned from China early this week after leading a delegation of Wisconsin businesses and professionals on a trade mission to China. The goal of the mission was to promote Wisconsin agribusiness, encourage trade and educational exchanges, and exhibit Wisconsin products at the 2016 China International Dairy Expo and Summit in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province.

"Wisconsin and Heilongjiang Province have been sister states for more than 30 years, and what unites us is our common interest in dairy," Chalmers said. "During a briefing meeting with the USDA Agricultural Trade Office/Shenyang and the Wisconsin delegation, Heilongjiang agricultural officials introduced a new provincial plan for a \$200 million investment in livestock expansion over the next three years. This will potentially provide more opportunities for export of Wisconsin and U.S. agricultural products such as frozen semen and embryos, farm equipment and feed."

The expo, held April 22-24, featured 305 businesses from more than 30 countries. As part of the expo, Wisconsin exhibitors participated in a successful Guinness Record-breaking attempt for "Largest Display of Cheese Varieties." Expo organizers enlisted the help of Wisconsin-based Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls to work with Wisconsin businesses and DATCP to identify and gather cheeses showcased at the record-breaking display on April 23. In all, 24 Wisconsin cheese producers/distributors provided 417 cheese varieties and products. All told, more than 500 varieties of cheese from Wisconsin, the Netherlands, and China were displayed.

"Because this event was covered by both national and provincial media, it was a unique opportunity to introduce Chinese consumers to Wisconsin cheese," Chalmers said. "China is becoming a nation of consumers, and they are interested in purchasing high-quality Western foods, including dairy products."

Chalmers was joined by representatives from six Wisconsin companies who exhibited Wisconsin-produced goods and products in a DATCP-coordinated "Wisconsin Pavilion" at the dairy expo.

While at the expo, exhibitors had the opportunity to meet with government officials from both the USA and China as well as key industry experts, have one-on-one meetings with potential distributors and business partners, network with decision-makers and gain exposure through Chinese media. The expo is annually attended by leading business representatives from dozens of countries throughout Asia, Eastern and Western Europe, Oceania, and the Middle East.

Chalmers was joined on the trade mission (April 17-24) by DATCP economic development consultant Jennifer Lu. "Doing business in China is about relationships," said Lu. "Meeting face to face not only creates the opportunity to build awareness of Wisconsin products, services and expertise, it also sets Wisconsin apart."

The DATCP delegation also met with researchers from the Fuli Food Science Institute of Zhejiang University and Zhejiang Agricultural Academy of Sciences in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, to explore

potential educational exchanges and to gain a better understanding of China's food safety issues, especially with regard to dairy and infant formula.

China is the largest international market for U.S. Food and agricultural products, accounting for 20 percent of all U.S. farm exports, according to the USDA. China is also an important trade partner for Wisconsin agriculture. The country ranked third in 2015 for agricultural exports from Wisconsin. Products in demand include hides and skins, whey, lactose, lumber, ginseng and bovine semen. Total Wisconsin agricultural exports to China were valued at \$222 million in 2015.

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Cutline info:

DATCP Assistant Deputy Sandy Chalmers and several members of the Wisconsin contingent met with staff from the Harbin Daily newspaper. Pictured (l-r) are: DATCP economic development consultant Jennifer Lu; Chalmers; Fred Zhang, China representative from Wisconsin's Ellsworth Creamery; Ms. Shi Hong, director, Harbin Daily; Ms. Dong Xinying, reporter, Harbin Daily; and Carolyn Brady, UW-River Falls.

China International Dairy Expo and Summit attendees sample cheeses which were part of a Guinness Record-breaking display for "Largest Display of Cheese varieties."

Wisconsin businesses and products were on display in the Wisconsin Pavilion at the 2016 China International Dairy Expo and Summit in Harbin, China.